

Mayor's Report
Tuesday, February 17, 2015
Deborah G. Owens

Heritage Tower:

Battle Creek Unlimited and 616 Development have announced that final plans are nearing completion and expected to be revealed in the next 30 to 60 days for the proposed renovation of the 19-story Heritage Tower building at 26 W. Michigan Ave. in downtown Battle Creek.

The announcement comes after BCU and 616 emerged from a recent meeting with some plan modifications as indicated by Jim Hettinger, interim CEO of BCU.

To quote Mr. Hettinger, "We are excited that we have taken another major step toward making the long-awaited project a reality. The revised plan will really help fulfill a number of development needs and bring a renewed vitality to downtown Battle Creek."

The revisions include 90 hotel rooms and 58 market-rate apartments, along with retail and office space.

Derek Coppess, founder of 616 Development, stated, "This iconic building is the kind of project where our company can display our creativity and passion in working with aged structures."

The City stands ready to be of whatever assistance we can to see this project to fruition. Those of us who have been in Battle Creek a long time remember the beauty and usefulness of this building and can't say enough as to how thrilled we are to see 616 bring all its beauty back to the downtown.

Police:

The Battle Creek Police Department is looking for 20 local young men to participate in one of this year's Michigan State Police Youth Leadership Academy programs.

The program is free to participants and will take place August 2 to 6, 2015. The goal is to partner with 15- and 16-year-old youth with law enforcement officers to help them learn leadership and mentor skills and develop their personal character. Other programs will be held in Muskegon Heights, Lansing and Adrian.

Students will be provided with transportation to and from the Michigan State Police Training Academy in Lansing to participate in the program. They will begin each day at 5:30 a.m. to prepare for daily activities and lights out each night promptly at 10 p.m.

Students will be assigned a mentor for the week and will receive classroom instruction in nutrition, problem solving and gang violence, water safety, leadership, personal first-aid and more. Additional activities will include tours of the State Capitol and Michigan State University.

Workshop/Emergency Services:

February 17, 2015, the City Commission held a Workshop to discuss the mayor selection process as well as other items related to the City Commission. The last time the process was reviewed was in 2003 with a Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee. As a result of the year-long study the Committee ultimately suggested that the process not change. It was felt that enough time has passed that another look at the City's processes were warranted. It was suggested that the Mayor appoint a committee of citizens and possibly commissioners (present and past) to analyze if, indeed, issues exist and whether or not changes would be suggested. A process for applying for a seat on this Committee will be forthcoming.

During the February 17 City Commission Meeting Emergency Services Administrator Mike McKenzie and numerous volunteers from several of the division's groups presented to the City Commission a symbolic check in the amount of \$135,000, which represents the 6,000 volunteer hours in 2014. Volunteers present represented the following organizations: Community Emergency Response Team, Operations, Planning, Administrative and Logistics Team, Search and Rescue, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services Team, and Skywarn. For training opportunities to join these emergency services volunteers check the City's website at www.battlecreekmi.gov.

African-American Month:

A special "thank you" to City employees for their celebration of *Black History Month* through a soul food luncheon at City Hall on February 18, as well as the preparation and showing of a video of the many African-Americans who have not only served our City in many capacities, but those who serve throughout our community making a difference in the lives of all of us in Battle Creek. The luncheon was wonderful and the food out of this world!

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah G. Owens

Deborah G. Owens
Mayor

dgo

